

Howard County Consumer Affairs Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes for May 4, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

- Present: Sue Rogan, Katherine Bronstein, Ashlyn Hood, Jill Bussey
- Absent: Jerome Jackson, Richard Green, Felicia West
- Guest: Marshall McLeod

Minutes of the April meeting were approved as read.

Discussion of Potential Landlord-Tenant legislation

The Board discussed the merits of helping to gather information from the public about whether County legislation related to landlord-tenant issues was needed and if so, what type of legislation should be considered. The Board discussed the use of surveys and focus groups to get feedback from the community at large as well as from groups that are most heavily impacted: seniors, college students, foreign born and low income residents and residents with disabilities.

Since the Board has also been discussing a repeat of its Student Loan Forum this year, the Board agreed to commit to the effort but that it would need to be efficient and well organized. Becky advised the Board that OCA staff would also work on this project and that Department staff would assist in designing the project. Becky will meet with the Department's planner and report back with a proposed plan at the next meeting. Sue will create a Google Doc file for keeping track of information obtained from focus groups. Jill stated that she thought Baltimore Neighborhoods may have done something similar in the past so that organization may be a good resource too.

Student Loan Forum and Resource Fair #2

The Board discussed 2 possibilities

- Repeating the March 2016 "footprint" but narrowing the scope to information needed to find students loans and other money. Since a January or February event would run the risk of cancellation due to bad weather, the event should be held in mid-October. Another event could then be held later in 2017 focused on students who are already carrying debt and need assistance in managing and eliminating that debt.
- Turning the event into a webinar in which people could attend in person or participate over the internet. The event could then be planned for January or February and go forward successfully even if the in-person attendance is small.

Under either scenario, the event would be available for viewing from the Office's website. The Board debated which option would be easier. Becky offered to bring a timeline based on the March event to the next meeting for consideration. She will also confer with the Department's technology coordinator regarding the possibility of a webinar.

The Board also discussed whether to hold the event in the Howard building or to find a location in another part of the county, such as at Howard Community College. Becky and the Board members present agreed to talk with potential panelists from HCC, MHEC, Central Scholarships to find out if they would be willing to participate.

Discussion of Advisory Board By-Laws – on hold for the rest of 2016

Discussion of new Board member recommendations – by conference call on May 18 at 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 1, AT 7:00 PM
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM
6751 COLUMBIA GATEWAY DRIVE, COLUMBIA, MD 21046